

HISTORY OF THE EAST IN TABRIZ MINIATURES

The uniqueness and originality of the Tabriz school of miniature painting sets it apart from other schools of oriental miniature. This is one of the two leading schools of the medieval East, along with Herat, but the existence of the latter is limited only to one century - the 15th century. The evolution and development of the Tabriz school in the 14th-16th centuries covers the whole classic period of the fine arts of a vast region, including Iran, Azerbaijan, Ottoman Turkey, Mogul India and Central Asia. Consequently, the Tabriz school of miniature painting is not only the longest in time, but also the most powerful in the degree of impact on other cultures.

It equally is of not only artistic but also cultural interest, as at the time of formation it fed on the traditions of many modern and ancient cultures. The uniqueness of this phenomenon lies in the fact that to date there is no scientific or illustrative work devoted precisely to this leading metropolis of the miniature painting of the East.

In just a few centuries of the existence of miniature painting, the historical genre passed a complicated path of development first adhering to the oldest and rather schematic compositions that came to medieval art from rock reliefs, frescoes and ceramics toretics. The broad masses of fans of miniature painting had the misconception that it illustrated events of the legendary distant past and stories of characters from poems of Ferdowsi, Nizami and other poets of the Middle Ages. This misconception is refuted by historical works, palace chronicles and works of classical literature. Illustrations of historical chronicles and portraits of dedication to customers of manuscripts represent rich material for the study of the modern life of creators of miniatures. Besides, historical figures are imprinted in the images of characters of classical poetry such as Iskandar, Bahram Gur and others. Thus, we have two lines in art, which

allow us to restore the realities of those times.

The large number of Tabriz illustrated manuscripts allows us to single out a set of historical subjects. Their high artistic qualities make it possible to trace the evolution of the historical genre in its entirety, which is the immediate task of this article, and the development of the style of Tabriz miniatures.

It should be noted that, by choosing this theme, we would like to see the Tabriz miniature as a document illustrating, be it in a system of special characters and images, many of the important events of the past, giving an idea of how the Tabriz masters lived, what they believed in and how they saw the structure of the world, creating at the terrible time of the Middle Ages, the time of the establishment and destruction of the most powerful empires of the East.

Artists of the Tabriz school in the 14th century not only raised the miniature from illustrations to independent art but also created a language and the basics of composition and developed the colors of works of this genre. The origin and formation of the Tabriz miniature as a historical genre usually dating back to the 14th-16th centuries fell to the breakup of the colossal empire founded by the Mongols. An especially powerful state belonged to the Hulaguids – a family founded by the old grandson of Genghis Khan, Hulagu. Taking the title of Ilkhans - “rulers of nations”, these “savages”, as they were referred to by Europe awed by Turko-Mongols, managed to create a multi-stage administrative and effective tax system that allowed them to maintain life in the vast mixed tribal communities, accumulated unimaginable wealth and contributed to the flourishing of art, literature and architecture.

One of the most talented representatives of the Hulaguid dynasty was Ilkhan Ghazan Khan (1271-1304), a brave military chief and prudent ruler. It was during his

Battle between Mahmud and Ismail, the sons of Sabugtagin

rule that in the then outskirts of the capital – Tabriz, the world's first scientific and cultural center, Shamb-i Ghazan, was built. The real inspirer behind the creation of a scientific center near Tabriz was the chief vizier and historian of Ilkhans, Fazlallah Rashid al-Din. It is with his efforts and care that masters were brought together in the kitabkhana and conditions for their work were created.

The most important stage in the history of Tabriz miniatures is illustrations of the historical work "Jami al-Tawarikh" ("Universal History"). Their significance is much greater than the frame of the history of miniatures. This monument concentrates a large range of issues, and as if in focus, reflects the entire variegated panorama of Tabriz in the 14th century.

A large group of miniatures illustrates the history of the Seljuk and Ghaznavids. Visual techniques, the ethnic style of characters and their robes - all speaks of the Turko-Mongol tradition and the Turkic origin of the master. Horizontally elongated, miniatures represent different scenes of battles, where the same stereotype varies with minor changes. Sometimes it is a fight, sometimes - a group battle.

(The original is available) The miniature "Ala ad-Din executes his uncle Firuz Shah" tells the story of a real historical fact. The event took place in 695 Hijrah/1296. Ala ad-Din Halgi heard of the countless riches of the ruler of one of the cities in Deccan and raided it without asking the permission of his uncle Firuz Shah. Returning with large loot, he is in no hurry to enter Delhi,

explaining that with a fear of punishment. Firuz Shah, eager to share the loot and therefore ready to forgive his nephew, is in a hurry to meet him, which proved fatal for him. Unarmed and without bodyguards, he was killed by two courtiers who supported Ala ad-Din. The scene from the manuscript in London shows the same elaboration. This is the miniature on folio 27r depicting "Ala ad-Din Shah Halgi of Delhi putting his uncle Firuz Shah to death". The picture is divided into two parts by a standing personage, who occupies the whole height of the picture and even encroaches on the frame. He is directed to the right but turns back, one hand on his breast, and looks at the young figure behind him who holds his arm. From this gesture and the expression on his face we understand that something tragic is taking place. Another figure, behind the young one, turns to the left and watches the event. To his left the uncle of the Shah, his hands tied and his eyes covered, kneels and awaits his fate. The man with the sword to his left is about to cut off his head. In the right half of the picture we see the Shah on his throne, turning to the left, one hand outstretched and the other on his breast, with a striking expression on his face. Two figures in attitude of veneration stand behind him, and these together with another figure behind the executioner on the left frame the scene. In this scene also we see the same characteristics. It is framed by observers, and a certain movement goes from one figure to another leading the spectator to the main theme. There is also a certain psychological



content in the scene. The expressions on the faces suggest that something tragic is occurring; they are not frozen and uniform in every figure. Take the prince figure. His raised eyebrows and his hand on his breast suggest that he is having his uncle put to death. His right arm stretched out, as though he would stop this horrible act. The young figure touches the arm of the old one, looking at him with sad eyes as if asking for an explanation from the more experienced man. The old man in turn casts a tragic glance at the young man as if to say, "What a tragedy we are witnessing". The poor uncle indicates acceptance of his fate by bending down his head. Besides the faces, the elongated fingers express the horror of the scene. In contrast to these emotional figures, the executioner on the left stands calmly, about to strike the neck of the uncle with his sword. In this way the artist of the miniature picks up certain motifs of expression and by contrasting them and joining them by means of gestures and postures creates a unified expression within the picture. The skillful arrangement of the scene gives totality to the picture. (3, p. 119)

The miniature of the same manuscript "The Battle of Sabuktegin's sons, Mahmud and Ismail" depicts the struggle for the throne and the establishment of the Ghaznavid empire and dynasty. It skillfully uses a motif of clouds enveloping horses and elephants. In them, the movement often goes beyond the composition and is broken by the frame. Although these clouds are of secondary importance, their artistic effect is strong enough.

The next grand monument towering over the history of not only Tabriz, but the entire Middle East is the miniature "Great Tabriz Shahnama" or the Demotte "Shahnama" after its first European owner. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of this monument for the further development of all Muslim painting.

Miniatures show the emergence and development of another line in the genre, which is no less stable, reveals new opportunities and oversteps the narrow genre frame. In the scenes of fights, especially in the so-called "pathetic" miniatures of the manuscript, there is a complex range of feelings, the furious intensity of the struggle, the tragedy of the character dying in the prime of his life, the triumph of the winner and the resignation and hopelessness of the defeated person – this is the wide amplitude of feelings of characters in the Demotte Shahnama. Of course, there are miniatures typical for the historical genre of the scene of palace events, battles of armies, fights, and persecution of the retreating enemy. There are rare scenes like the execution of Ardavan or Navdar, capturing the moment before the execution. It should be noted immediately that these miniatures reflect events and realities of their time and contain a lot of hidden hints at contemporary events.

The historical genre, which has strategic and ideological significance in the 15th century, acquires particular importance. This initiative is immediately picked up by other schools of miniature and becomes one of the leading ones. Annals glorifying the great deeds of cus-

tomers were by far the most popular genre in the literature of the East. Moreover, along with descriptions of the life and deeds of specific individuals as in the case of the Timurid "Zafarnama" ("Book of Victories") or "Timurnama" ("Book of Timur"), or in the 16th century with Ottoman "Selimname" ("Book of Selim"), "Suleymannama" ("Book of Suleyman"), with Mughal "Baburnama" ("Book of Babur") and "Akbarname" ("Book of Akbar"), it created really large-scale works like "Jami al-Tawarikh" ("Universal History") created in Tabriz in the early 14th century. With these illustrated chronicles in which real events were interspersed with myths and legends, the historical genre took a special place in the creative experiments of artists of the Tabriz kitabkhana.

(The original is available) "Works on the history of miniature painting keep strangely silent about the art under the so-called Turkmen rulers. Meanwhile, from the death of Shah Rukh to the rise of the Safavids, the most powerful in the region were the rulers of the Black Sheep and White Sheep clans (Qaraqoyunlu and Aqqoyunlu), and some of them, namely Pir Budaq and Yagub Beg, are known from literary sources as patrons of literature and art," according to B. V. Robinson (4, p.215).

The founder of the Qaraqoyunlu dynasty, as we already know, was Qara Yusuf, the son of Qara-Muhammad, a commander in the service of Sultan Ahmed.

The eldest son of Jahanshah, Pir Budaq, was killed for a rebellion in 1465, and two years later, and Jahanshah was caught unarmed while hunting by his rival Uzun Hasan.

In 1457, the troops of the Turkoman confederation of Qaraqoyunlu tribes headed by Jahanshah conquered Iran, including the major art centers of Herat, Shiraz and Isfahan ... He sent his eldest son Pir Budaq to govern Fars. The latter was a philanthropist and, perhaps, artists followed him to Shiraz. In 1460, Pir Budaq rebelled against his father and was forced back to Baghdad, where he remained until his assassination in 1466. Without a doubt, he took some of the artists with him to Baghdad, because colophons of manuscripts contain such evidence.

In 1467, Uzun Hasan Aqqoyunlu suddenly seized Jahanshah while he was hunting and killed him, dispersing his supporters. With extraordinary rapidity, he seized all the possessions of the latter and until the end of the century, the entire region was under their rule.

The first patron of arts among them was Pir Budaq, son of Jahanshah Qaraqoyunlu, whom we have already mentioned. In political life, he was engaged in riots and opposition to his father all the time. After ruling Shiraz and the rebellion, he moved to Baghdad, where he rebelled again and was executed after the siege and capture of the city. The best product of his philanthropic activity is the famous "Kalila and Dimna" of Tehran. Initially, the manuscript was dated to 1410-20, but now the generally accepted date of its creation is the 1460s, which is more consistent with the style of miniatures. Its colophon, unfortunately, was lost, but the double frontispiece miniature depicts the young prince and his entourage, and "taking into account the style, splendor



<p>نخستین شسته ازین بخت روزان ز مهرش به سبقت بی من سبام دلش کشت بزم ریخته بود جبر نایب بر آید و شهر کز شاه که بر باد زبنت ناه شرافشان سر به تنها آید شاه خسته از زندگانی شین خردش بر سحر از هوا زنگشت همه عرقان خواستند زینهار جو گرفت و درش کوفته لکام شاه شست و بر کشته نوان بای تو اذوق استودی</p>	<p>کزبان بند بخت اردوان بکشت بزم ریخته از آناه خواست که ای آید شو اردوان کما فی بزم که از اردو شین و دان زوی لشکر باورد شاه خرفشان سر از در و قشاق زین کشته و بویع از آناه بوندا کئی و بلز از آناه بر روی کجا آخت شد از آناه بدشت کئی مزد خست از نام فرمود آناه شب تا از آناه شین کزنده از آناه نایب دی</p>	<p>که با زور دل بود با فری بر که بهمن به بخت آید و خنجر زورن آید از زلف کز برای بگو شش زلفش کز خون بود هستی کز دلش کز آناه جز بکشد ز ناک و هند و آناه مسان بشته شد از آناه دل خست کما کز آناه برین لشکر آناه باید کز آناه بهاد از آناه شین اردوان</p>	<p>بیکبار از نشان نگران بکشد برین سر نشان تا بشهر بکشد در نماهای کنگ از آناه هزاران کز آناه بیرون بود ز کیل و ز نیکم شبه کز آناه زین ناله کز آناه و آناه زمر کز آناه شین یکی با درختان شین که از کز آناه اردوان بود کز آناه از آناه اردوان</p>	<p>وز فناد و ز قلب کما از آناه آناه کز آناه اردوان کما بهمن کنگ از آناه هستی کز آناه شین شبه کز آناه اردوان عکاک از آناه اردوان بزان نامد از آناه اردوان بشک از آناه اردوان شین از آناه اردوان جک از آناه اردوان زور از آناه اردوان زیندی از آناه اردوان</p>	<p>از آناه کز آناه اردوان بشک از آناه اردوان شین از آناه اردوان جک از آناه اردوان زور از آناه اردوان زیندی از آناه اردوان</p>
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گردانیدند اردوان از آناه اردوان



<p>شاهان نامدار از جهان نامند و در خفته از آناه اردوان</p>	<p>باید در آناه و فرزان کز آناه دو فرزند و هر کز آناه</p>	<p>دل در کنگ از آناه اردوان نسا از آناه اردوان</p>	<p>عشقر تپاش بدیم کنگ اکتر تپاش از آناه اردوان</p>	<p>که زور در آناه اردوان جمه از آناه اردوان</p>	<p>بدر کنگ از آناه اردوان شین از آناه اردوان</p>
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Shah-nameh of Demotte. The battle of Ardashir with the son of Ardawan

and the assumed date of the manuscript, no sovereign can claim this place." /5, p.30/.

(The original is available) "... The "Kalila and Dimna" of Tehran, one of the most beautiful of all the existing models, was attributed to Herat in 1410-20 from its first publication in 1931. But in our article of 1958, we suggested that this is the third quarter of the 15th century and that the frontispiece depicts the young shahzada, the customer is Sultan Husayn Mirza. We do not dismiss this hypothesis, but a careful comparison with Istanbul manuscripts and others creates a guess and moreover, a belief that this is the young shahzada - Pir Budaq, and the manuscript may be dated 1460-65 in Baghdad /4, p.217 /, Robinson reiterates his version. The celebrated Tehran Kalila wa Dimna as we noted above was formerly thought to date from 1410-20, but it is now generally conceded that a date in the 1460s is more in accordance with the style of the miniatures. Its colophon is unfortunately lost, but the double-page frontispiece shows a young prince holding court, and, given the style, magnificence, and probable date of the manuscript, no other prince really fills the bill. Admittedly Sultan Huseyn Mirza of Herat, to whom we shall return later, began his

long reign in 1468, but though most of the miniatures have a superficially Herati appearance, the figures and landscape elements mark them out as the products of Turkoman patronage.

The first proposition still stands, but careful comparison with material at Istanbul and elsewhere that has since come to light induces the belief that Pir Budaq is the young prince in question, and that the manuscript dates from his Baghdad period c. 1460-5. From the admittedly scanty biographical material available we may suppose that he was barely thirty at the time of his death in 1466, and the prince in the Tehran frontispiece is certainly in his twenties." /4, p.217/.

1467 was a boundary (abroad) in our brief review of the time of so-called Turkmen rule, when power passes from Qaraqoyunlu to Aqqoyunlu. Uzun Hasan quickly seizes the whole empire of Jahanshah and rules in Tabriz until his death in 1478. Now he is in power in Tabriz, and he created a lush and brilliant court (1468-78). He patronized scientists and writers of all countries, gave them signs of respect and generously rewarded them, greatly exceeding their best expectations.

The first leader and founder of the ruling Aqqoyunlu

dynasty Uzun Hasan resembled Timur with his artistic tastes: both murals and miniatures focused on historical subjects. Unfortunately, splendid frescoes with battle scenes from the palace of Uzun Hasan did not survive. "On 6 November, we were invited by the shah, and he showed us most of his residence in the midst of meadows crossed by a stream, in a charming village. The square-shaped hall was decorated with scenes of battles," writes the Venetian diplomat Ambrogio Contarini received by Uzun Hasan in 1474. (7, pp. 10-11)

(The original is available) "We attribute a delightful two-page hunting scene from the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg to Uzun Hasan. Usually it was attributed to 1470, but to Herat. But nothing in the style fits the academic precision of the product. On the contrary, there are stocky figures here, a huge variety of Turkic caps, fantastic rocks with zoomorphic endings, trees and clouds with diverse and visionary images. Like Pir Budaq for the "Kalila and Dimna" of Tehran, no other ruler of the time can be conclusively linked to this work, in which a lifetime portrait of the founder of the Aqqoyunlu dynasty Uzun Hasan can be seen in the image of a galloping bearded king warrior in the center of the composition," this is the opinion of Robinson /5, p 32/.

Thus, in the galloping horseman on the right side of the composition, we see the greatest of all Turkmen rulers of Iran captured shortly after the victory over Jahanshah and the moving of his capital to Tabriz," Robinson writes in conclusion /4, p. 219/. It may be permissible to connect with Uzun Hasan the famous double-page hunting scene in Petersburg, which has been inserted in a fine copy of the Silsilat al-Dhahhab of Jami, dated 956/1549 (Dorn, 434). This impressive painting has been most recently dated to the 1460s or -1470s and assigned to the Herat or Central Asian school. Most people would agree with the suggested date, but the Herat or Central Asian attribution may perhaps be questioned. /5, p. 32/.

The miniature contains a number of features that we find a little later in a work executed for Yaqub Beg: the bold, original and varied treatment of rocks, the bare bushes, the upright bushy trees and the large straggling irregular clouds. In fact, the generally exuberant and unacademic appearance of the painting is quite unlike the sober and meticulous work we associate with Herat. In particular it may be noted that many of the rocks include human and animal faces, a feature never found in Herat work, and that the figures, wearing a great variety of Tartar caps, are of Turkoman type.

There can be no doubt that a miniature of such impressive size and outstanding quality must have been commissioned by a ruler of more than ordinary power and importance. But apart from Sultan Husayn Mirza, the only man who measures up to the required stature at this time is Uzun Hasan. So we may have here, in the galloping horseman halfway down the right hand sheet, the only contemporary portrait of the greatest of all the Turkoman princes, Uzun Hasan, painted soon after his overthrow of Jahanshah and the establishment of his capital at Tabriz. /4, p.219/.

Yaqub Beg Aqqoyunlu was 11 years old when he ascended the throne, but his literary and artistic tastes manifested themselves very early. He was a patron of Jami. In the field of fine arts, his success was to attract two top-notch artists Sheikhi and Dervish Muhammad to the court, and most of their works have survived in Istanbul albums. The 13-year reign of Yaqub (1478-90) was a time of great cultural and artistic flowering. His court was a refuge for poets, and even the great Jami devoted an allegorical poem called "Salaman and Absal" to him. The group portrait from Album N. 2153 is considered to be a portrait of Yaqub Beg himself with the court. Costumes, poses and people - all are similar to the miniatures of so-called "Khamsa" of Yaqub Beg in 1481 (Topkapi, N. 762).

Yaqub Beg can be recognized in the image of Bahram Gur in several miniatures, particularly, in the miniature "Bahram Gur visits the Green Palace", where a young man bends over books and tools of a calligrapher, and one of his court ladies recites poems aloud. Also, S. C. Welch assesses "Bahram Gur in the yellow palace" as a portrait of Yaqub Beg himself.

These works from the manuscript of "Khamsa" by Yaqub Beg clearly emphasize the uniqueness of the Tabriz style, in particular, the only battle miniature of the 15th century from the 1481 "Khamsa" of Yaqub Beg; for example, the "Battle of Khosrov with Bahram Chubine" is a grandiose battle scene as seen from above. This battle, like the remaining miniatures of the manuscript, testifies to the original way of development of the Tabriz school and in fact represents one of the battles of Uzun Hasan.

These historical chronicles of the 14th-15th centuries and their illustrations are on the threshold of the highest rise of the historical genre in the Tabriz Safavid art of the 16th century. Their rich material gives not only a big picture of historical events and the ruling elite, but also a wide panorama of society and covers almost all segments of the population. ❀

Shah-nameh of Demotte. The funeral of Iskandar**References:**

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